

HOUSING CRISIS

DEMOLISH
CAPITALISM,
BUILD COMMUNISM



Under communism workers come first ! WE will be abolish money and private property.

CHICAGO, July 19—Chants rang out from working-class tenants and their supporters: “People’s needs over landlords’ greed!” Seventy-five pro-housing fighters gathered in front of their south side apartment protesting their eviction notice by the new owners, a property management company by the name of LeVav. Copies of CHALLENGE were distributed to arm our class with communist ideas to counter this racist attack against the mostly Black senior residents of the

building.
In a communist society, housing will no longer be a commodity, something to be bought and sold, it will be guaranteed for all working-class people. The notion of rent will be abolished completely. When we in Progressive Labor Party (PLP) say, “Fight for communism,” we mean an egalitarian society where housing justice is guaranteed!

Fight alongside workers, reject liberal Big Fascists’ poison
PLP joined with a coalition of tenants’ rights groups to support this struggle against LeVav and other real estate bosses. LeVav has bought several buildings with

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OUR FIGHT

✧Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✧The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today’s world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✧Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world’s workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✧While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead,” capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✧Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society’s benefits and burdens.

✧Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of “race.” Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✧Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✧Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✧Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion’s false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✧Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP’s criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a “following” around any particular individual. While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual’s writing of an article.

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue \$1. One Year: \$20. Six months: \$15. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202 August, 16 2023 • Volume 55 No. 17

Editorial

U.S. lap dog Israel moves toward fascism

In yet another blow to the crumbling U.S.-led imperialist world order, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s hard-right coalition passed a bill to strip the Supreme Court of much of its power to check the country’s moves toward open fascism. The U.S.—home of genocide, slavery, Jim Crow, and lynchings to this day by the capitalists’ kkkops—is sounding the alarm that its longtime ally is being “degraded” into “a corrupt and racist dictatorship.” Although workers in Israel erupted in protests, most are drinking the poison of liberal democracy and nationalism.

Israel serves as the latest evidence that the U.S. imperialists’ once ironclad grip is weakening amid an international crisis of capitalism. The dominant U.S. Big Fascists of finance capital are fending off enemies from without and within. After freely bullying the world since World War II, the finance capitalists are struggling to compete with rising superpower China while fending off a challenge from more domestically oriented capitalists, the Small Fascists fronted by Donald Trump. At the same time, smaller capitalist countries are being destabilized by this sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry as it propels the world toward fascism and world war.

The only antidote to this capitalist disaster is communist revolution by an international, multiracial working class. Progressive Labor Party fights for workers everywhere to break the chains of the bosses’ dictatorship. From the river to the sea, smash capitalist democracy!

No nation, no exploitation —only workers’ liberation!

At the heart of Israel’s current controversy is a reform that eliminates the “reasonableness doctrine,” the Supreme Court’s power to override officials’ decisions as “unreasonable.” After the bill was passed despite a stern warning from U.S. President Joe Biden, tens of thousands of workers walked off the job, called for a general strike, and blocked highways and airports. Thousands of military reservists have resigned. Even active members of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), infamous for their partnership with U.S. police and their mutual love of mass surveillance, torture, and racist terror, are threatening to abandon ship.

The spectacle of protesters wrapping themselves in the apartheid Israeli flag is a reminder that these mass protests, no matter how militant, amount to dead-end reformism and toxic nationalism. Since Israel’s birth as a “Jewish state” in 1948, the Supreme Court has never called out the deportation, terrorizing, or murder of Palestinians as “unreasonable.” In 2018, the Israeli parliament passed the gutter racist Jewish Nation-State Law, which declared that only Jewish people had a right to “self-determination” in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. It promoted Jewish settlements in the occupied territories and abolished Arabic as an official language. And all of this was perfectly “reasonable,” according to the Supreme Court, which sat on its hands.

Liberal democracy is designed to mislead workers into embracing the capitalist rulers’ dictatorship. All forms of nationalism, including the Israeli and Palestinian varieties, lead to capitalist oppression by different sets of bosses. Workers in every historically colonized country can attest to that.

No honor among thieves: Israel plays both sides

In the bad old days of the liberal world order, the U.S. exerted unchecked control over most of the world, with Israel as their bought-and-paid-for watchdog in the Middle East. Even as Israel displaced nearly a million Palestinians (middleeastmonitor.com, 6/21/17) in 1948 and then kept expanding its illegal Zionist settlements across the West Bank, its apartheid regime received more U.S. aid than any other country since World War II (Congressional Research Service, 11/16/20).

But the era of unchecked U.S. supremacy is over. This year alone, China has made trade deals with Russia, strengthened ties with Brazil, and brokered a pact between U.S. nemesis Iran and Saudi Arabia, the lynchpin of the oil-rich Arabian Peninsula. In June, President Xi Jinping issued a thinly veiled threat to impose “countermeasures” to anything perceived as “endanger[ing] China’s sovereignty, security and development interests” (Bloomberg News, 6/28).

Democracy soaked in Palestinian workers’ blood

When hypocrites bemoan the erosion of democracy in Israel, they’re talking about the same democracy that expelled and massacred Palestinian families. The same rule that birthed and bred Zionist apartheid in Israel-Palestine. The same system that bars 5.5 million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip from voting in their phony elections. Instead, they are murdered by starvation wages, mass unemployment, and bullets.

We cannot be fooled by the bosses’ deceptive framing of “democracy” vs “dictatorship.” What pathetic theater! Liberal democracy and fascism are two sides of the same murderous capitalist coin.

Every Israeli raid, demolition, and killing of Palestinian workers has been enabled by the U.S. bosses. Israel pulls the triggers. The U.S. pays for the guns.

That’s why the greater danger in Israel-Palestine is not Netanyahu’s band of openly vile fascists, but the friendly, liberal “lesser-evil” fascists who will lead our class to slaughter.

U.S. allies are caught in a high-risk balancing act, and Israel is no exception. Netanyahu has described the China-Israel alliance as a “marriage made in heaven” (Kehila News Israel, 3/20/17). Nearly \$4 billion per year in U.S. blood money couldn’t stop Netanyahu from tweeting, “...Israel is no longer another star in the American flag” (The Times of Israel, 7/10). The brazenly corrupt prime minister gave China access to Israel’s advanced AI technology while dragging his feet in sending arms to Ukraine in its war with Russia, despite Biden’s repeated requests (New York Times, 1/17).

These acts represent a threat to the U.S. and a net gain for China. They spell war for workers everywhere.

U.S. mouthpieces voice imperialists’ dilemma

The U.S. Big Fascists are agonizing over how best to deal with their racist friend. While New York Times columnists Thomas L. Friedman (7/18) and Nicholas Kristoff (7/22) toyed with proposing that the U.S. cut off military aid to Israel, the Brookings Institute’s Natan Sachs argued that the U.S. should act with “a vision based on promoting regional stability and integration, and shaped by the U.S. competition with China and Russia” (Foreign Affairs, 7/28). The bosses’ mouthpieces¹ have no shame, do they?

In fact, the U.S. has of late expanded its military exercises with Israel. In early 2023, as Sachs notes, an exercise called Juniper Oak, the largest ever, sent a message that “local partners” such as Israel remain “a cornerstone” of the U.S. strategy for “future crises,” even as U.S. resources are stretched thin in Ukraine and East Asia.

The U.S. imperialists are caught in a bind. To allow Israel’s lurch toward open fascism, with no pushback, would be to lose even more credibility as a “rules-based” power (as if!), and drive nation “swing states” closer to China. By giving a green light to even more ruthless oppression of the Palestinians, it could jeopardize U.S. dreams of a Saudi-Israeli normalization, a pact that might limit future China inroads. On the other hand, publicly defunding Israel would risk losing the U.S. bosses’ regional partner in crime and give China more maneuverability in the Middle East. It’s a contradiction they can’t solve without war.

Given the volatility of U.S. imperialism and the bosses’ state of chaos and disunity, it’s hard to say exactly what will happen next. But two things are for certain. First, the capitalists are always driven by profit and power. Second, to secure that profit, they will inevitably go to war. Our class will pay the price with our lives. What is to be done? We must build a mass working-class movement, calling on all workers—Jewish, Palestinian, Muslim, Christian, Black refugees from Sudan and Eritrea— to reject capitalist oppression and racist division. PLP fights for one communist world where we rule for the entire working class. That is liberation. Workers must smash capitalism and break away from the clutches of rising fascism.

¹ The New York Times, The Brookings Institute, and Foreign Affairs are among the most prominent mouthpieces for the dominant imperialist wing of the U.S. ruling class. They formulate the strategies to preserve global U.S. dominance. Think: intellectuals for blood-soaked profiteers.

Racist housing conditions = social murder

NEWARK, NJ, July 21—While liberal fascist Mayor Ras Baraka and Newark's ruling class are preoccupied with portraying Newark as a model city, working people and students in Newark are left to reckon with social murder through police terror, decaying schools, displacement, high rent prices, deplorable living conditions and faux gestures of solidarity between wealthy developers, antiracist fighters and workers. Stephen Crane Village, one of the last housing projects in Newark, with a demographic of mostly poor and disabled, Black and Latin workers, made news when a horrible explosion leveled part of a building. Six people have been injured and one person is in critical condition. A total of 31 people are on the brink of homelessness, living in a hotel that they cannot afford and at the hands of Newark Housing Authority to provide access to the next crumbling complex. This is not a long term solution for working people and the longer we leave our futures in the hands of these crooked misleaders, the more members of our class will die.

The bosses' media blankly asks, "How did this happen?" But workers in Newark and all over the world have experienced crumbling conditions for decades with no long term solution. The change that's needed is for workers en masse to no longer rely on lying liberal politicians and their land developer friends. Workers need to turn this crumbling system into an opportunity to build a future where workers lead and run a world based on egalitarianism and commitment to their class—the working class. Under communism, housing will be a right granted to all workers. Slumlords will not exist and anyone that tries to sell out the working class will be jailed or run out of town.

Displacing workers through gentrification

Meanwhile, under capitalism, the United States Housing and Development (HUD) and the City of Newark claim to be investigating the causation of the explosion. Angry tenants have demanded answers—but have yet to receive one. Members of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) visited some of these tenants and one told us that hours before the explosion, there was a lingering smell of gas. "It always smells like gas here. But they're going to say and blame us for it like they always do." Just like this Black woman worker shared, the half-told news is starting to spread that it was a res-



ident that left their oven on that caused the explosion. Regardless of the conclusion Newark Housing Authority reaches, they will never say that it was capitalism and racist neglect that caused the explosion!

For the future that Baraka and wealthy developers at NJPAC, Prudential, Audible, Rutgers University and their friends at Goldman Sachs want, housing complexes like Stephen Crane, Bradley Courts and the Spires must go. The situation in Stephen Crane is part of a decades-long process of urban renewal and gentrification. The number of low income public housing complexes in Newark is dwindling, either being privatized by greedy developers who aim to turn them into mixed-income complexes— meaning that the rent will be set to mostly market rate prices, leaving options for low income residents limited. Or, the buildings will be demolished completely. "The fundamental problem is that investors have heightened rea-

sons to jettison poorer tenants in favor of those who can pay more, and to evade price constrained housing in favor of unconstrained lease terms" (Who Owns Newark, Rutgers CLIME Report, 2022).

In 2022, Ras Baraka and HUD scum Victor Cirillo, celebrated the demolition of Seth Boyden Terrace, a housing complex in Newark's South Ward and announced that \$100M Lionsgate Studio would take its place. One comrade from the headquarters of Lionsgate in Canada shared that her home town is now filled with film studios and is unaffordable to the point that even the film studios refuse to pay to film there—most likely because they can exploit and displace another set of workers for less elsewhere. Now New Jersey workers are next on the chopping block to be exploited and squeezed out. We won't let them set up shop without a fight.

No 'safe' houses under capitalism

When PLP organized with a comrade who lived in Stephen Crane and went door to door with their fellow neighbors, and conducted surveys last year, the residents were immediately receptive and vocalized their displeasure at the poor conditions they faced living in the complex. Those included mold, vermin, insufficient heat in the winter and repairs that often went unaddressed. The verdict is clear: There are no safe housing conditions for the working class under capitalism! Anything that is given to one group of workers is and will always be at the expense of killing another group of workers. The only way that we all win is by fighting for a total overhaul of this capitalist system and building a communist future.

While the U.S. ruling-class prepares for a potential war with Russia and China, more fascist attacks will be amplified against workers, and it will be our most vulnerable— those who live in public housing, where many workers are not only Black and Latin, but elderly and disabled, who will become the first targets. It will be homeless workers (see Jordan Neely) who will be subjected to violent attacks. We must fight back against the racist and classist policies of HUD, and against two-faced liberal misleaders like Baraka who tells Newark that buying a home is a way to combat gentrification. We must not fall for their tricks to convince workers that capitalism can work for us. This is why we must organize and fight for communism!✊

Chicago: tenants reject liberal poison



Continued from page 1

the goal of evicting workers, so they can charge new workers moving in up to 50 percent more in rent (Chicago Tribune, 7/24). Naturally, this has been pushed through without any say from the current tenants.

In the demonstration and rally, speakers stated that they want a chance to talk with LeVav, to try and negotiate a settlement with these capitalist robbers. The speakers included liberal Alderman Byron Sigcho-Lopez of the Pilsen neighborhood on the city's west side. He noted that there are currently sixty thousand

unhoused workers in Chicago, and that new legislation is needed to fight these few predatory companies who destabilize entire neighborhoods. He followed up this statement with "leftist sounding" rhetoric: "eviction is a violent process, and 82-year-olds shouldn't be worried about where they're going to live."

This same alderman – quite the progressive celebrity Big Fascist politician (supporter of billionaire finance capitalists) – is also the chairperson of the Chicago City Council Housing Committee. Sigcho-Lopez and the City Council do not oppose the interests of the landlords. They get money for their campaigns to find

the best deals for capitalists, no matter what they say. If the City Council wanted to outlaw the predatory and violent reality of evictions, they could pass laws right away to do it. But most workers know on which side the city government is on -- the landlords' side. It is on us as communists in PLP to give the organizational leadership and political vision to win workers over to the fight for a worker-run society and housing for all.

Sigcho-Lopez failed to point out that these racist and violent displacements and evictions are not a new occurrence. In fact, the district that he represents has been going through gentrification for years. Because of the fundamental racist segregation and inequality of the capitalist profit system, evictions are mainly carried out in Black and Latin working-class neighborhoods.

In every major city, we are witnessing on a mass scale the displacement of workers in favor of higher income individuals and families. This is done under the logic of the capitalist system to maximize profits and increase property tax revenues.

Profit system is a menace, organize communist revolution

Don't be fooled by slick Big Fascist politicians like Alderman Lopez; they know what side their bread is buttered on. They use progressive language and identity politics to gain the support of the working masses, disarming our class politically and setting us up for the inevitable attacks of racist state violence like evictions or police murder. They pretend to be on our side but stab us right in the back.

There are thousands of families evicted each year in Chicago, because under capitalism, profits always come first. The profit system is deadly for the working class – let's organize a mass PLP and communist revolution to destroy capitalism forever!✊

Chinatown: learn to fight, fight to learn

Picket shows how to fight liberal racists



CHINATOWN, New York City July 12—Progressive Labor Party (PLP) ended our summer project on a red-hot note, turning the working-class neighborhood of Chinatown into a hub for communist ideas. Workers and students braved the heat and poor air quality (capitalism-induced) and joined a PL'er, leading the antiracist fightback in Chinatown on a historic tour, culminating in a rally to support a two-year picket led by workers in the Coalition to Protect Chinatown and Lower East Side against the Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA) and the museum's board of liberal finance capitalists overseeing the displacement of Black, Latin, and Asian workers.

MOCA accepted a bribe to support the City's racist jail expansion plan. As capitalism tumbles, more workers will be evicted or imprisoned. Nonprofits like MOCA are just some of the politricks the liberal rulers use to manage the hell they create for workers, using identity politics to cover their racist, sexist tracks. Experience shows us only our class can make change. If all workers put their collective muscles and brains together, we can smash this system once and for all!

Learning to fight

The PL'er walked us through landmarks of class struggle they helped lead in the neighborhood and shared stories of antiracist fightbacks. We began our tour on Bowery where an inspiring militant and anti-racist multigenerational group of mostly women immigrant workers from Fuzhou, China fought against their landlord Joseph Betesh. The tenants united 100s of multiracial workers against liberal fascist Democrat Mayor Bill de Blasio's racist displacement agenda.

Our guide exposed the harsh reality behind the myth of "good Chinese workers" and revealed how these so-called "prosperous" businesses were built on the backs of underpaid and overworked Chinese workers.

We then saw the four restaurants her organization picketed to demand the \$1 million in wages stolen from exploited workers. She spoke of the struggles of the first Chinese restaurant workers' union, which struck against powerful Chinese boss gangs, exposing the nationalist lie that bosses and workers shared the same interests. Despite a hard-fought victory resulting in a temporary win for workers, the restaurant shut down, and many of the relegated workers have been central in the mega-landlord Jonathan Chu-MOCA conflict.

For more than a half-century, the Chu family increased their wealth through property investments in Chinatown, owning Hotel 50 Bowery, East Bank and more. During the pandemic, Jonathan Chu closed the largest dim sum eatery in Chinatown and threw 180 employees out of work. They picketed his business, while MOCA called for his reopening of one of the

*'How do
you spell
racist?
M-O-C-A'*

only unionized restaurants in Chinatown. Recently Jonathan Chu had a hand in a local rezoning plan to destroy rent-controlled units and incentivize luxury development.

Inside NYC liberal fascist toolkit:
jails and museums

In an act with seemingly good intentions, the Big Fascist Bill de Blasio administration, and City Council green-lit plans to shut down Rikers Island - one of the most oppressive jails in the nation. But they had another agenda: providing lucrative building contracts for their developer friends, funded by taxpayers' hard-earned money. In Chinatown, they proposed constructing the tallest jail (40 stories) on North America's soil - demolishing the current Manhattan Detention Center and displacing Black, Latin, and immigrant youth and working-class victims of their profiteering for whom they deny education, living wages, employment, and housing.

Capitalism forces two options for workers in Chinatown: To be buried in their jails or be displaced and have a historical marker put on display at MOCA. It is with these two options that workers see how liberalism seamlessly paves the way for fascism.

When MOCA opened in the early 80s it was run by Chinese scholars and organizers with the intent of popularizing Chinese working-class histories. Since then, however, it has strayed from its roots. It got swept up in the non-profit industrial complex, receiving funding from foundations like Bloomberg Philanthropies and a board stacked with finance capitalists of Asian descent. Nancy Yao Maasbach, MOCA's former president and Goldman Sachs financier, initially op-

posed the new jail construction —until she accepted Councilmember Margaret Chin's \$35 million bribe as part of a community agreement deal. Now, while workers suffer, MOCA plans to expand with this money.

From the South Bronx Hip-Hop Museum to Chinatown's MOCA, cultural institutions are being used by real estate bosses to promote toxic identity politics and push their liberal fascist agenda.

Fighting to Learn

At the end of our tour, we began to prepare for the picketing. We made colorful signs and practiced chants. We fueled ourselves for the fightback with steamed buns and dumplings while our comrade shared a victory for the picket line: in a similar fightback, Nancy Yao was ousted from her #girlboss gig at the Smithsonian Women's Museum after the picketers exposed her sexist dismissal of sexual harassment at MOCA (NYTimes, 7/5).

Our multiracial contingent headed down to MOCA armed with our signs that read "Displace Racist landlords with communist revolution."

The chant "M-O-C-A: how do you spell racist?" reverberated in the air.

PL'ers distributed dozens of CHALLENGE newspapers and flyers while curious onlookers stopped to talk to us about what was happening, asking questions about the issues behind this fight, and walked away with a copy of our paper. Two PL'ers gave speeches exposing racist displacement and criminalization of Chinatown workers, saying the only solution is a communist revolution, as workers drove by and honked in approval.

Though MOCA doors were closed, their racist building director wasted no time in calling the kkkops to shut us down. Two kkkops approached the PL'er giving the speech to snatch the bullhorn but they were quickly intercepted by two other comrades. As they talked the cops down, our group began to chant without the bullhorn: "Cops and landlords don't protect us, working people defend us."

A red delicious lesson

We ended the day with ice creams from Chinatown Ice Cream Factory, and digested an important lesson. We, the working class, have the tools to run society. The workers fighting in Chinatown are an example of how we can unite and fight racism with one of our sharpest weapons: multiracial unity.

PL'ers will continue to fight alongside workers and youth, raising the need to go beyond reforms and realize that the only way out of a racist system is to fight for a communist system where we will be in full control of the property, wealth, culture, and history WE create.✪

Kentucky

We confronted the Klan & spread communist ideas

KENTUCKY, June 24—When the Ku Klux Klan tried to intimate antisexist protesters with a gun, we didn't back down. Progressive Labor Party joined with an LGBTQ+ rally to fight the racist, sexist Klan and share communist politics.

The Klansmen were creeping around the parking lot with guns but fled once they were spotted. But then more Klansmen walked to the rally site. Since we had the permit, they weren't able to counter-protest on the parallel sidewalk, so they were just shouting at us from way down the block.

The uniformed and undercover cops were there—but only to prevent violence in front of local businesses. It's evident who the kkkops protect. The cops, the state, the ku klux klan—all are part of the bosses' plan.

The small fascists and their racist and sexist taunts were pitiful and unintelligible. In the end they cowardly slinked away. Our bold protest showed that nothing can stop antiracists, antisexist, and communists from standing our ground, advancing the struggle, and generating mass support for communist politics.

How it started

On TikTok, comrades learned of a confrontation with Klansmen at an LGBTQ+ organizer rally in early June. The rally was protesting the state's anti-trans sexist legislation (Senate Bill 150) that legalizes discrimination against transgender youth in schools and healthcare. SB 150 misgender students, require doctors to deny gender-affirming care for working-class youth, and prohibit discussions on topics like sexual orientation.

In this early June rally, the cardcarrying members of small fascist scum from the town of London had shown up at the park handing out membership cards. They waved membership cards in the face of protesters.

One organizer smacked the card out of the Klansman's hand. That's when the fascist vermin drew a handgun.



'The cops, the state, the ku klux klan—all are part of the bosses' plan.'

The kkkops made him put the gun down and berated "both sides." Both the cops and klan are foot soldiers for capitalism, using terror to defend this virulent racist, sexist system.

When the PLP members saw this, they got in touch with the LGBTQ+ group and participated in their follow-up protest today. Why? Because injustice to one is injustice to all.

How it's going

At today's rally, fighters in the crowd chanted anti-racist, antisexist slogans like, "K-K-Cowards!" and "Gay Workers! Trans Workers! All Workers!"

A PLP member had sketched up a PLP poster that said "Smash sexism. Smash fascism. Smash capitalism."

Another PL'er talked about our Party to others. They spread revolutionary ideas throughout this action,

A bigger fascist danger

The entire U.S. ruling class is flailing—economically, politically, and militarily—as China rises and the U.S. hegemony is under siege (see editorial, page 2). There are two main camps: the Small Fascists and the Big Fascists. It is important to expose both.

The Republican lawmakers controlled by Small Fascists (billionaires whose capital is concentrated in domestic oil, tech, etc.), across the country are ramping up their sexist attacks on gay and trans youth.

Meanwhile, the Big Fascists (billionaires whose wealth is concentrated in global finance capital and oil), who claim to be on our side, are the ones who birthed and bred this racist, sexist system to begin with.

The Big Fascists are the biggest danger for the working class in the U.S. because their liberal, friendly-sounding jargon is pacifying millions by building the illusion that they can create a "nicer capitalism." In reality they are attempting to win us to patriotically fight and die in the name of U.S. imperialism. We need to expose the hypocrisy of the liberal bosses. Historically, they laid the foundation on which these Small Fascists attacks are possible.

handing out CHALLENGE, making connections, and stressing the need for workers to organize our forces. During the protest and march, one young woman even asked us how to unionize!

Fight the Fascists, Big and Small

According to The New Republic (7/12), the KKK has been posting flyers all over Kentucky. They have been emboldened by the Small Fascists (see box). But we also cannot let the closeted racists—the Big Fascists—get off scot-free. The different factions of the ruling class are fighting, but the working class cannot fall into the trap of picking a side.

To end these attacks on workers we need to smash the racist and sexist system that breeds fascism, kkkops, and the klan with communist revolution. ☛

From de Blasio to Adams

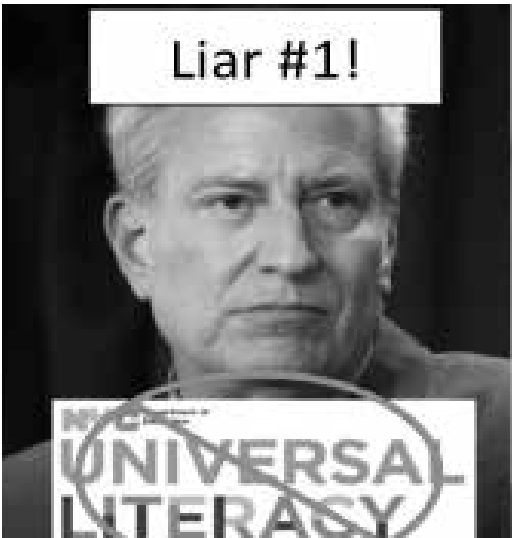
Racist liberal pols cut literacy for kids

This past June, approximately 200 literacy coaches, supporting hundreds of elementary teachers, and thousands of students, were fired from their positions with little notice. The simple fact that almost all of these positions were filled by women, many of whom were Black and Latino makes this a massively racist and sexist attack (Chalkbeat New York, 7/13). While former Black kkkop, Mayor Eric Adams and his appointed lack NYC Schools Chancellor, David Banks are responsible for this cutback, it is more complicated than blaming one administration over the other.

Big Fascists education plan: racist inequity and mediocrity for our students

From 2014 to 2021, Big Fascist (see Glossary, page 6) misleader and former NYC Mayor, Bill DeBlasio along with a 'multicultural' crop of NYC Public School Chancellors (Carmen Fariña, Richard Carranza, and Meisha Ross Porter) orchestrated this massive attack. Under the sham "Equity and Excellence for All" Initiative, they claimed that "all third graders (would) read proficiently by 2026." As a result, approximately 500, early childhood literacy coaches were hired by the previous "Universal Literacy" Initiative (ULit). ULit reading coaches spent the bulk of their time in Kindergarten through 2nd grade classrooms, working closely with teachers and students (NYT, 9/22/22). They learned how to apply the science of reading, developed training sessions and parent workshops, co-planned, modeled and co-taught reading and writing lessons with teachers, and built meaningful relationships with their students and families. One former ULit coach and recent CHALLENGE reader stated:

We put our heart and soul into that job. Most of us were women of color and the first time most of us had been offered a leadership role. I didn't think that capitalism would or could teach all children to read. However, most of us successfully



trained thousands of early childhood teachers to improve their literacy instruction. As a result, students in the classrooms made real improvement in reading and writing. We were the ones that teachers looked to for day-to-day leadership and support. Not their principals or phony school bureaucrats.

Despite the sincere efforts of the ULit coaches, DeBlasio's liberal misleaders and the bosses' racist capitalist school system had no intention of teaching "all" (or even most) students to read. Another former ULit coach, CHALLENGEreader, PLP study group member, and May Day marcher added:

The DOE never provided the necessary resources, interventions, and additional staff needed to support students reading below grade level." She added, "everyone blamed the pandemic as the reason why children didn't learn to read, but I learned in a PLP study group that in two years, communists in Cuba taught workers to read



with limited paper, books, and other necessary supplies. In 1961, tens of thousands of volunteers, "the brigadistas," who were mostly young women, went to every corner of Cuba to teach people to read and write.

By the end of DeBlasio's regime, the 2021 3rd grade New York State English Language Arts test showed that less than 50 percent of students had met a passing benchmark. (NYSED, 2022) In addition, NYC public school enrollment dropped by more than 50,000 children, over 100,000 public school students were suffering from homelessness, and more than 200,000 students with disabilities did NOT receive their support services (NYT, 12/8/21). While these liberal misleaders got an 'F' in serving the needs of early childhood students, these 500 coaches continued to serve their class with the work they had spent between three to seven years developing.

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LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Summer Project inspired me!

The 2023 summer project inspired me to recommit myself to mass work in the service of communist revolution. The sustained fightback of many comrades in different areas was really impressive to witness and support. It was inspiring to find out Shantel Davis's close relative had joined the Progressive Labor Party and called for communist revolution. In addition to the mass work scheduled into the trip, it was informative and encouraging to meet the comrades involved in mass struggles I had read about in CHALLENGE and hear from them first hand about the conditions faced by the international working class. Multiple comrades – including Black and Latin comrades – had been attacked and called racist by liberal misleadership in mass organizations for their principled stands in Chinatown and in the Rutgers strike. These comrades worked closely with a multiracial base in fightback against reformist and class collaborationist misleadership.

The accusations were ridiculous and invariably related to the bosses' lackeys in union and community misleadership deflecting justified criticism. It was an eye opening experience. Sadly I learned that one of my comrades had lost their job since last summer as a result of their workplace fightback. However, seeing them continue to fight and organize motivates me to take more risks in struggling for communist revolution and the Party's line. I learned a lot about the real conditions workers face on the ground, and fighting shoulder to shoulder with the dedicated PLers through the summer project is once again the highlight of my year.

★★★★★

A night of collective culture

Our club was so very motivated by the recent Progressive Labor Party convention that we wanted to bring our base and members together to celebrate. The following weekend, we organized an evening of song and poetry in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole—and lots of good food to keep us going—for over 25 people: young and old, workers and students, veterans and folks

who joined us for the first time, from several countries.

There were three guitarists; one comrade brought rhythm instruments so that whoever wanted could join in making music. Another comrade brought copies of a PLP songbook so that everyone could sing along, which was very helpful for those who were new to this kind of event. A couple of friends sang both original political as well as traditional songs in Creole and several people got up and danced.

We think that events such as this one, though modest and spur of the moment, helps us understand our role in creating the kind of collective culture—antiracist, anti-sexist, international, and pro-revolutionary communist (the polar opposite of capitalist culture)—that our Party and our class needs to develop to build a new world. Power to the working class!

★★★★★

My first convention: I was so impressed!

I had the privilege of attending the 2023 Progressive Labor Party convention for the first time. Since it was my first time, I had no pre-existing thoughts about what to expect. I must say that I was very pleased with the way the convention went. I was very impressed to see that the Party is really a multiracial group of individuals from different parts of the world who are fighting for the same vision and goals.

Ideas and solutions were debated in an open forum in which every member had the opportunity to express their struggles, experiences, and opinions in trying to advance the Party's line forward which includes fighting against racism, sexism, for better healthcare, and for an egalitarian world and much more.

I was able to witness firsthand how a decision is made. It was really a collaboration among different folks from different walks of life. In addition, while there, I was able to see that the working class struggle is always at the forefront of their agenda.

★★★★★

Remembering comrade Donna

Comrade Donna Perone was one of several comrades who passed away since the last Progressive Labor Party convention in 2015 (see Obituary in CHALLENGE, 5/1/19). During the 1980s she was chairperson of the International Committee Against Racism (INCAR) in Boston. While in Boston she was also part of the PLP security forces who physically battled the racist anti-bussing group Restore our Alienated Rights (ROAR) and the KKK. She was active in the bilingual education movement, and fluent in Spanish, French, and Italian. She created the first parent, teacher, student bilingual education organization, Project Pride, in the Spanish community while a counselor in the Framingham, Massachusetts public schools.

Family members in Italy were anti-fascist partisans in Italy during World War II. Her father was a member of the Young Communist League in the forties, and taught building trades in the South Bronx to Black and Latin students.

Donna organized to fight environmental racism and successfully led a movement of hundreds of people to halt the construction of a toxic waste burning incinerator in the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn. Later, while a professor at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia she opposed the teaching of identity politics putting forth as an alternative a Marxist class analysis.

Further, she taught that IQ testing and standardized tests were part of the bosses' racist plans to segregate the schools. Her award winning doctoral dissertation on reducing violence in the schools by creating parent, teacher, and student organizations served as a model program in the Philadelphia public schools.

Donna was a PLP member for over forty years, and her motto was "Serve the People," which she did as an internationalist revolutionary communist throughout her life before succumbing to cancer after a heroic two and a half year struggle.

★★★★★

GLOSSARY: COMMUNIST TERMS

Fascism

Capitalism's response to a crisis of their system, when the bosses can no longer sustain the charade of liberal democracy and resort to more direct control and state terror instead. Fascism is marked by the ruling capitalists disciplining their own ranks to serve the urgent needs of the capitalist state and weather the crisis. To defend their system from internal and external threats, they use all the means available in their state apparatus, including violence. To build unity within their class and loyalty from workers, they rely on nationalist politics and calls for sacrifice. Their strategy is to mislead the working class to kill our working class sisters and brothers in the next inter-imperialist war.

Big Fascists

The Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalist faction of the U.S. ruling class. They represent the wealthiest and most powerful bosses in the U.S., including multinational banks like Chase and Citibank, multinational oil companies like ExxonMobil, the big automakers, Boeing, Amazon, and the major media companies. As the dominant grouping since World War II, the Big Fascists were the architects of the liberal world order with the U.S. bosses on top. Their dominance rests on U.S. financial and military power and its strategic control of the Middle East and the flow of oil to Europe, Asia, and Africa. To sustain this dominance, they need to rebuild a huge, multiracial military for inter-imperialist war, most likely with China.

Small Fascists

The Small Fascists are a group of domestically oriented U.S. capitalists who are challenging the Big Fascists over the direction of U.S. imperialism. Since their interests are less tied to controlling the flow of oil, they are against heavy taxation to keep troops in the Middle East and in general oppose costly military bases and invasions. They're willing to rely on a smaller, whiter army, backed by nuclear weapons and the Air Force. They use open racism to build a political following.

Letter from India: Nationalism incites racist mass slaughter

Nearly three long months. That's the duration of an attempted ethnic cleansing in Manipur, a small province of extreme geopolitical importance, bordering Myanmar in North-Eastern India. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its ideological fountain head Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh are deeply experimenting with a neo-Nazi model there. Why so?

The seven states in that part of India (often nicknamed as Seven Sisters) are overwhelmingly indigenous in terms of their ethnicity, language, culture, and belief systems. Such thriving diversity doesn't fit into the fascist ideas of Hindutva brigade there. As a result, this murderous plot was hatched, when Indian prime minister Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, to divide the people across their religious and ethnic identities. In Manipur the majority Hindu Meiteis are living in and around the valley of Imphal, the state capital. In contrast the minority tribes belonging to the three clans Kuki-Zo-Naga are mostly residing in the hilly and forest areas. To extract the resources from these latter areas, particularly



the mineral and hydrocarbon reserves, the rulers (BJP) at the national and regional levels are trying everything to displace and disperse the non-Hindu population. The present mayhem in Manipur, therefore,

comes out imperialists and nationalists blueprints of terror.

As of July 21, more than two hundred people, including women and children have died there. Thousands are wounded and a quarter of a million people have either fled the state or live in rescue camps in subhuman conditions. Numerous cases of rape, torture, and large-scale atrocities with active participation from the state police are also coming out in the open as the internet blockade there was partially withdrawn after a directive of Supreme Court of India.

At the height of such large-scale violence, it's ironic that the fascist Modi was touring the US and the Middle East, meeting the state heads there and was giving lectures on the "great tradition of Indian democracy."

The experience of Manipur reaffirms the historical necessity of working-class unity, cutting across all other lines at the local, regional, national, and international levels as the imperialist world system plunges into a third world war.

“I’m A Virgo” exposes fascist superhero



I am a Virgo villan “The Hero” (pictured above) symbolizes Big Fascists who hide their brutality behind social justice rhetoric.

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there is only ever focus on exceptional, individual characters rather than workers or the working class. Jones, a communist leader, hogs much of the limelight while the workers she organizes remain as a prop in the backdrop. This is in contrast to Soviet films in which the workers that compose the backdrop are essential since it is always about the working class breaking into the frame to make history for themselves. Second, this focus on the exceptionality of Jones leads to an ending in which she uses words and reason to defeat the Big Fascist “Hero.” This is after “The Hero” has tricked Cootie into believing he is on the side of the workers, despite previously

brutalizing Cootie and taunting him with advertisements of a 13-foot jail fit for a giant. Rather than showing the power of the workers or that workers need to organize to fight fascism, Jones merely explains Marxist theory to “The Hero” who submits and flies away. This is dangerous wishful thinking! The ruling class will never hand over power peacefully, and fascists do not respond positively to reasoned discussions. We hope workers’ power and fightback will play a more significant role in Season 2 of the series.

Young People Need PLP!

Despite its flaws, *I’m a Virgo* is a sharp depiction of what working-class youth experience and learn through struggle. While the entire premise and style of *I’m a Virgo*

might be off-puttingly absurd and weird for some, it captures the absurdity of the deepening capitalist crises we are living through. After all, it is absurd that young workers are to accept being exploited by capitalists while the climate, housing, healthcare, education, and political crises accelerate. Dealing with capitalist social murder and genocide while business as usual continues every day can can undoubtedly feel absurd without the guidance of a Party. In the face of rising fascism, we need young workers to learn the lessons that Cootie does: we need an organized, internationalist, revolutionary communist Party committed to defeating racism and sexism. In other words, just as teenage Boots Riley on his first summer project: we need PLP! ☘

Racist liberal pols cut literacy for kids

Continued from page 5

Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks dealt a racist and sexist blow to this integrated team of educators. At the same time that Adams and Banks filled various high-paying city office positions with a new ‘crop’ of Black and Latin Bureaucrats, by June 2022, this integrated team of coaches were reduced to 200, leaving 300 of them to find new positions within the Department Of Education (DOE). Dozens of ULit coaches had reached out to their union, The United Federation of Teachers (UFT) for support. While their UFT Representative held a few virtual meetings with over 400 hopeful coach participants, the ULit coaches were told to passively wait for a favorable resolution. Although one coach challenged the union representative, and suggested a petition to keep their jobs, another coach responded, “Fighting will only get the Chancellor angry at us and could ruin our chances of getting a different out of classroom position.” Unfortunately, many of the coaches remained passive and followed the misleadership of the union.

One year later, the DOE slashed the entire coaching program. The rest of these 200 coaches were sent an email that told them to find work elsewhere.

Our PLP study group member added,

De Blasio set up the ULit program to fail, and Adams used it as an excuse to get rid of us entirely. Adams and Banks are now pushing a mandated curriculum reform across school districts, but without real in-class coaching support, teachers will have to do ‘more work with less support.’ I can safely say the quality of instruction for our students has suffered since 300 of our coaches were slashed. Now that everyone is gone, it will get even worse. Although cutting all the coaches was a racist and sexist attack, the greatest attack is on the students we serve.

Communism: the best education for our class

During the past seven years, these 500 literacy coaches were an inspirational group of educators and one could only imagine the impact they could have on our youngest learners if we lived under a communist society. That is why our CHALLENGE reader’s comment about the 1961 Cuban Literacy Campaign is critical. As a previous CHALLENGE article stated, workers “can’t get mired in dead-end reforms” and must rely on the working class to teach and care for our children. Not these capitalist politicians or union misleaders. Let’s turn all these fightbacks education into a fight for a communist world. Only then can we truly educate our class.” Onward comrades!



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Interimperialist competition on display in “coup belt”

New York Times, 7/29–Africa’s coup belt spans the continent: a line of six countries crossing 3,500 miles, from coast to coast, that has become the longest corridor of military rule on Earth. This past week’s military takeover in the West African nation of Niger toppled the final domino in a band across the girth of Africa, from Guinea in the west to Sudan in the east, now controlled by juntas that came to power in a coup — all but one in the past two years...Until this past week, Niger was the cornerstone of the Pentagon’s regional strategy. At least 1,100 American troops are stationed in the country...Any American withdrawal could open a door to Russia. The sight of Russian flags being waved by coup supporters in Niamey this past week echoed similar scenes after a coup in neighboring Burkina Faso last year.

Expanding war requires expanding weapons production

NikkeiAsia, 7/27–The Ukrainian military has begun using cluster bombs in its counteroffensive against Russia, following Washington’s decision to supply Kyiv with the controversial weapons amid a munitions shortage...U.S. President Joe Biden...defended what he said was a “very difficult decision. This is a war relating to munitions. And they’re running out of that ammunition, and we’re low on it,” he said in an

unusual admission of U.S. limitations that could potentially undermine its deterrence...the U.S. initially resisted Ukrainian requests for the arms...But it reversed its stance as an ammunition crunch left it with few other options to support Kyiv. The shortage has also affected U.S. commitments to Taiwan, including by delaying the delivery of Stinger portable anti-air missiles and other arms...The Pentagon is now working to boost production...With U.S. intelligence assessing that Chinese President Xi Jinping has ordered the military to be ready by 2027 to invade Taiwan, addressing supply constraints in the defense industry could prove to be a race against time.

French racism has long history

Al Jazeera, 6/30–French police brutally killed a 17-year-old in broad daylight during a traffic stop. Police initially lied and accused the youth of trying to run over an officer. And, as is often the case, national media reported police fabrications as facts — until cell phone video from a bystander showed the devastating truth...people across the globe have seen the horrific images of French police brandishing rifles and menacing the occupants of a yellow vehicle in the Parisian suburb of Nanterre before summarily executing the teenage driver with a bullet to the head as he pulled away...France has a long and sordid history of colonial racism...stretching from Haiti, Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean to Réunion Island in the Indian Ocean, North and West Africa as well

as Vietnam, among many other populations. France has ruthlessly oppressed Algerian people in particular — including those who are French citizens...During the Algerian war for independence (1954-1962), hundreds of thousands and possibly more than 1 million Algerian people were slaughtered and systematically tortured by the French regime...In 1961, French police killed more than 100 French Arabs who were peacefully protesting in Paris.

U.S. ally deadly for human rights defenders

The Guardian, 4/4–Colombia was the deadliest country in the world for human rights defenders in 2022, accounting for 186 killings — or 46% — of the global total registered last year, according to the latest report from the international human rights group Front Line Defenders...killings of rights defenders across the globe increased in 2022, with a total of 401 deaths across 26 different countries, compared with 358 deaths in 38. Colombia saw more than three times the number of human rights murders than Ukraine last year, which was the country with the second highest number of rights defenders killed in 2022, with 50 registered cases. In 2021, Colombia also topped Front Line Defenders’ charts registering 138 rights defenders killed.

“I’M A VIRGO” CAPTURES CAPITALIST CRISIS AND BIG FASCISTS



Cootie the 13 foot man represents the working class a sleeping giant whose power is stifled by Big Fascism and low class consciousness.

I’m a Virgo is a new TV series that depicts the coming-of-age story of a 13-foot tall 19-year-old Black giant named “Cootie.” Boots Riley, the series director, was raised in the Progressive Labor Party—in interviews, he often recounts how, in his teenage years, the Party took him on a summer project to organize farm workers in California. *I’m a Virgo* still retains and forwards elements of PLP’s line: the Big Fascists (liberal finance capitalists masquerading as friends of the working class, see Glossary, page 6) are the greatest threat to the working class and Black workers are key to revolution.

Black Workers Against Social Murder

Centered on the perspective of a 19-year-old Black teenager, *I’m A Virgo* works dialectically to show how workers develop class consciousness through trial and error. We see the failures of Cootie’s parents, Lafrancine and Martisse, who attempt to shelter Cootie

to keep him safe from capitalism while raising him to be a revolutionary. The Marxist theme of discipline is displayed through his parents’ expectations for Cootie to read for 10 hours a day, exercise for three, dedicate an hour to hygiene, and a lifetime of abstaining from fast food. But being cut off from the world becomes intolerable for Cootie who wants to learn for himself what it means to live as a Black giant despite the dangers.

Venturing out into the world, Cootie first attempts to play into the capitalist system by being a fashion model but finds himself exploited, unfulfilled, and unable to save his newfound friend Scat from ruling-class social murder. Scat gets into an accident and is turned away at the emergency room because of a lack of health insurance. Scat later dies an ignoble death but in a way that sparks fightback from Cootie, his

Astrology, anti-scientific mind trap

Astrology is a device for liberal fascist rule. With there being an exorbitant amount of surplus labor and workers being disillusioned with conditions under capitalism, oftentimes astrology is used as a tool for workers to attempt to learn more information about the world, connect with one another and find solace in decisions that they cannot control. At this stage of capitalism, the use of astrology is a tool to exploit the working class, further drives individualism, false identities and divisions within the working class, and worst of all attaches pitfalls of the ruling class to star, moon, and sun transits.

friends, his comrades, and fellow workers.

The shape of the fightback takes on two forms: Cootie’s anarchism and their friend Jones’ communism. Jones, a Black tenant organizer, explains that the capitalist healthcare system requires workers’ deaths to maximize profit. To fight back, Jones organizes workers to picket and strike against the hospital and greedy insurance executives. Meanwhile, Cootie runs across a police line to write graffiti only to be swiftly arrested by a Big Fascist supercop played by Walton Goggins named “The Hero.” The lesson here is key, individualism in acting does not build toward a revolution—it just leads to a month of Cootie’s house arrest. This struggle between Cootie’s anarchism and Jones’ communist politics becomes the focus of the TV series as they grapple with the brutality and misleading nature of the comic book “Hero’s” liberalism.

The Big Fascists are the Main Danger

Against Marvel’s individualistic, righteous superheroes, “The Hero” symbolizes police terror cloaked in liberal slogans of “justice” and order. As a billionaire, he openly uses marketing and comics for children to delude workers into believing that a white-knight, high-tech billionaire is on the side of the working class. His rhetoric of law, order, and the struggle against “crime” is so seductive that it even gets Cootie on “The Hero’s” side. Cootie has to learn through class struggle that as a Black worker, “The Hero’s” fight against crime is really a fight against Cootie and his entire class. In a Dark Night of lower class consciousness, workers must learn the same lesson and overthrow Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg, and their ilk. The only way I’m a Virgo could be even stronger in this critique is to have “The Hero” be a non-white person, since the Big Fascists increasingly hide behind multicultural faces like NYC Mayor Eric Adams, NJ Mayor Baraka and Mexico’s President AMLO to inflict capitalist terror.

For all the strengths of *I’m a Virgo* in showing communist politics in an easily digestible TV series, this season’s ending leaves much to be desired. First,

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WRITE FOR CHALLENGE!

CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons.

The next deadline is night of Friday, August 11

Send to desafio.challenge@gmail.com. For some guidance and house style rules, please go to www.bit.ly/338ZJow

All submissions are open to collective discussion, struggle, and change. See sidebar on page 2 about fighting for collectivity and against a cult of the individual.

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